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Maps

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Maps

Before you woke up this morning,
I crept quietly down the stairs
and spread every map that I had in my head
across the wooden table of my memory.

By candlelight I sat,
back straight and fingers drumming,
glancing at the scales and legends
as I waited for the coffee to brew.

I traced the familiar routes,
traveling along them once more:
the winding road up the mountain from campus
and the faint red-clay trail from the cliffs down to the creek.

I strolled again from the hotel to the piazza
where we paid too much for wine,
and descended the steps between my bedroom
and the old garage door that stuck on cold mornings.

I was wandering by the harbor in the rain when I saw you
standing on the bottom stair, rubbing your right eye and smiling in your
night-gown,
returning from someplace far away.

Brett Stonecipher